

Financial Connection

*News You Can Use from the Financial Management Service
A Bureau of the U.S. Department of the Treasury*

3 Answering the call: An analyst's blog of Hurricane Katrina volunteerism



Treasury aims to convert paper tax payments to electronic

The U.S. Department of the Treasury has announced the launch of Simplify, a national campaign to communicate to tax preparers and small businesses

the benefits of paying taxes electronically through the Electronic Federal Tax Payment System (EFTPS). Simplify underscores the benefits and security of paying taxes electronically.

EFTPS enables tax preparers, businesses and individuals to pay federal taxes electronically, including corporate, excise and employment taxes, and 1040 quarterly estimated tax payments. EFTPS offers a variety of payment methods, including the Internet and a telephone voice response system, as well as other electronic solutions for tax preparers of all sizes.

TAX PAYMENTS

EFTPS growth is on a roll

In fiscal year 2005, the number of EFTPS payments processed rose 7 percent to 78 million, and the dollar volume increased 11 percent to \$1.8 trillion compared with the previous year. On Dec. 15, 2005, EFTPS received \$68.84 billion in payments, the highest single-day amount in its nine-year history. More than 6 million users are enrolled.

“Although EFTPS serves a growing number of taxpayers who recognize it as a reliable, secure and convenient method for doing business with the government, far too many tax preparers and small businesses still use paper coupons,” said Donald Hammond, Fiscal Assistant Secretary. “Simplify will enable us to build on the recent successes of EFTPS and help encourage additional taxpayers to use the service.”

“In 2005, 68.4 million tax returns were filed electronically

through IRS e-file. IRS now receives more returns electronically than on paper. This breakthrough shows increased public interest in electronic interaction with the government," said Kevin Brown, Internal Revenue Service (IRS) Commissioner. Small



EFTPS Continued on page 2

WHY PLAY AROUND WHEN IT COMES TO PAYING TAXES?

START

- Payroll taxes
- Self-employment

Payroll taxes and self-employment

- Monthly and quarterly payments

Monthly and quarterly payments

- Direct deposit

Direct deposit

- Payroll and self-employment

Payroll and self-employment

- Reduced risk of late payment

Reduced risk of late payment

- No need to wait for a check

No need to wait for a check

FINISH

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- Self-employment

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Print ads in trade publications read by tax preparers and small-business owners are part of the Simplify campaign.



Business/Self-Employed Division. "The Simplify campaign exemplifies a wider effort by the Treasury to serve an increasingly wired public through a variety of electronic filing and payment processes, including IRS e-file, e-pay and e-services."

The campaign will promote usage of EFTPS through partnerships with national, state and local tax preparer and small business organizations, and through media, Web relations and advertising.

For more information, please visit the Simplify Web site at www.simplifyeftps.org. To enroll in EFTPS, please visit www.eftps.gov.

Quick facts about EFTPS

EFTPS is a free service provided by the U.S. Department of the Treasury.

Since its inception in 1996, EFTPS has processed more than 528 million transactions and \$12.5 trillion in payments.

More than 1 million new users signed up in fiscal year 2005, joining more than 5 million taxpayers who are already enrolled.

EFTPS allows taxpayers to pay all federal tax payments electronically, including corporate, excise and employment taxes, as well as 1040 quarterly estimated tax payments.

EFTPS offers a variety of payment methods, including the Internet and a telephone response system, as well as other electronic solutions for tax preparers of all sizes.

EFTPS is convenient, allowing users to schedule payments in advance, any time of day, any day of the week, from any location.

EFTPS users receive immediate confirmation that instructions for payment have been received and can retrieve exact details about their payment history for the past 16 months.




Tell your clients about EFTPS.
And make FTD coupons more fun to use.

These people are excited and happy because they just received their first EFTPS coupon. It keeps their tax information secure and EFTPS also lets you schedule the information on your clients' computers.

It's a win-win situation. They'll tell their friends, and you'll get more business. And that's always good for business.

Visit www.simplifyeftps.org for more information and tell your clients about EFTPS.

www.simplifyeftps.org 

Looking for something to do with your Federal Tax Deposit coupons after you begin making tax payments via EFTPS? The Simplify EFTPS print ads offer whimsical alternatives while explaining the benefits of paying electronically.

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To answer the call...

Note: In the wake of Hurricane Katrina's devastation, Christopher Tighe of the Financial Management Service's Automated Standard Application for Payments (ASAP) Development Staff within Federal Finance, responded to the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) call for volunteers to assist in disaster recovery.

Given less than 24 hours to prepare, Chris was initially sent to Orlando, Fla., for training, and ultimately sent to serve at two separate Disaster Recovery Centers (DRC) in Laurel and Collins, Miss.

Chris sent his coworkers an e-mail blog of his experiences. An excerpt follows.

Day 31.5 Katrina Task Force Log
This may be my last dispatch as tomorrow around 11 a.m. I leave for Jackson to check out and then on a flight back to D.C. Friday morning.



"Katrina wiped away clean the foundations of homes and then just left the debris on top of other homes," Chris says.

Therefore, I have decided to let my three other teammates say hello and say a few words to you. First up is Mike, my roomie for the past month, a 24 year old who works for Department of Education Office of the Inspector General...Mike?

Hi, this is Mike, who just slipped Chris a \$50 to say those nice things about me. This has been an amazing five weeks. I feel like I've been down here a year rather than a month, and it's going to be odd to be back, but I miss my friends and D.C. calls. Putting all these people together for 16 hours a day, seven days a week has brought out a lot of drama from the staff they could film a Real World in Laurel, Miss. Thanks for anyone who supported us, through donations, prayers or thoughts.

Thanks Mike. Next is "Snowflake" Julianna. We call her snowflake because the crazy (U.S. Department of Agriculture) woman who became friends with me called Julia Snowflake as she is originally from Chicago, but now lives in Florida working for NASA as a rocket scientist...yes, a rocket scientist.

Hello everyone. Despite the drama that ensued while in Mississippi, the ends have justified the means. Each of us here (Chris, Julia, Mike and I) is extremely grateful and appreciative



The team (from l.): Mike Herring from the Department of Education Office of the Inspector General (OIG), Julia Chiu from Education's Office of Student Loans, Julianna Tassy from NASA Shuttle Ground Systems and Chris Tighe.



Katrina Continued on page 4

Katrina from page 3

of your generous gifts for the children and survivors of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. I especially marveled in watching the kids peruse the toys, playing games and coloring and laughing. Thanks!

Next is Julia Gulia (yeah not her real last name) she's also from Ed, but does student loans.

Hi y'all! Spending the past month or so in Mississippi (no, I didn't forget the other two S's, that's how they said it down here) has been one of the most rewarding experiences of my life. I came down here not knowing what to expect when I volunteered, but I'm grateful for what I was able to accomplish and learn. It's amazing how in one month, you can learn so much about others and yourself. The things that I will forever remember are the amazing people that I've met. The people in this great state have been incredible. And sometimes even more incredible are the people who I have had the pleasure to work with through this stint. I was lucky to have such a great team (Chris, Julianna and Mike) to be by my side at all times. Without them, the successes wouldn't be as fulfilling, and the sad times would be just depressing. One of the most important things I will take away is that we have to always show compassion for all, especially those who need our help. Thanks to all of Chris' coworkers and friends for all the toys, coloring books and snacks! I wish you could see the faces of the children who came in and got a toy or coloring book to take home. Well, this has turned into one big long paragraph and I'm about to fall asleep so I must say good-bye for now. I'll be back! (smile)

Thanks, Julia. Perhaps after I digest a bit, I'll send you all lessons learned but here is a snapshot:

- Not everyone has the ability to show compassion.
- Every individual's exact issue is the most important issue to them at that particular moment, whether a few shingles were taken off their roof or their house was flattened.
- FEMA may not be able to do much



The team slept on a racquetball court for the first two weeks or so.

for individuals, but there always are a myriad of other options.

One last thing. This last thing I really cannot put into words and it may not come across that strong.

As public servants, we have our own little projects and our own little inner office politics and issues and crisis, etc. One of the greatest things that we can do as government officials is to actually do things that directly affect people and be able to actually see those results.

Being able to have the opportunity to directly touch people and serve them on the front line has been a humbling honor and the highest privilege. Walking the elderly over to USDA so they can apply for a grant to fix up their 90-year-old farmhouse; telling an extremely poor family

that they can be relocated anywhere they want to go in the United States and watch them start thinking and the tears welling up in their eyes as their mind starts dreaming of a new future; listening to irate people who aren't going to be helped by FEMA suddenly change their tune when I explain the tax credits that are available to them through the IRS and or how they might be eligible for a 2 percent home loan; even to the crazy woman 'Tracy' who came in darn near every day with her journals and notebooks and receipts for everything from peanut butter to laundry soap. It was an honor and a privilege to serve. I hope that in some way I can do it again. I actually would come back down here in a heartbeat if allowed.

Until then...Okey Dokey Karaoke!!!



UPCOMING EVENTS

For more about FMS events, see www.fms.treas.gov/calendar.html.

Feb. 15-16: Customer Advisory Board Meeting, Mountain View, Calif.

Feb. 28-March 1: Customer Advisory Board Meeting, Austin, Texas.